

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for treating a viscoelastic proteinaceous fluid, whereby management of said viscoelastic fluid by an absorbent article is improved, comprising the steps of:

treating at least one portion of said absorbent article with at least one treatment chemistry selected from the group consisting of ~~ionically cross-linking water-soluble~~ gelling agents which crosslink protein, thickening agents, mucolytic agents, agglutinating agents, plasma precipitators, lysing agents and combinations thereof; and

contacting said at least one portion of said absorbent article with said viscoelastic fluid, thereby one of altering at least one property of said viscoelastic fluid and altering an interaction between said absorbent article and said viscoelastic fluid.

2. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said viscoelastic fluid is menses.

3. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is in a form of solid particles.

4. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is uniformly dispersed on said portion of at least one of a surface and an interior of said absorbent article.

5. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said absorbent article comprises a cover sheet, a backsheet, and an absorbent layer disposed therebetween and said at least one treatment chemistry is disposed on at least a portion of at least one of said cover sheet, said backsheet and said absorbent layer.

6. (Previously amended) A method in accordance with Claim 5, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is disposed along a peripheral region of said absorbent layer.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 5, wherein said cover sheet, said backsheet and said absorbent layer comprise at least one nonwoven web material.

9. (Previously presented) A method in accordance with Claim 8, wherein said nonwoven web material comprises a plurality of polymeric fibers and said at least one treatment chemistry is disposed within said plurality of polymeric fibers.

10. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 5, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is dispersed within said at least one of said cover sheet, said backsheet and said absorbent layer so as to form a gradient therein.

11. (Currently amended) A method in accordance with Claim 5, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry ~~is at least one said cross-linking~~ comprises the water-soluble gelling agent and a superabsorbent is disposed in said absorbent layer.

12. (Previously presented) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said absorbent article comprises a nonwoven web material selected from the group consisting of airlaid, coform, spunbond, meltblown, bonded carded web, non-bonded pulp, bonded pulp, fibrous webs and combinations thereof.

13. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 9, wherein at least a portion of said polymeric fibers are bicomponent fibers and said at least one treatment chemistry is disposed within one segment of said bicomponent fibers.

14. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 8, wherein said nonwoven web material is a laminate.

15. (Currently amended) A method for treating a proteinaceous viscoelastic fluid comprising the steps of:

forming a nonwoven web material;

dispersing at least one treatment chemistry selected from the group consisting of ~~ionically cross-linking~~ water-soluble gelling agents which crosslink protein, thickening agents, agglutinating agents, plasma precipitators, mucolytic agents, lysing agents and combinations thereof on at least one of at least a portion of a surface of polymeric fibers forming said nonwoven web material and within at least a portion of the interstices of said nonwoven web material; and

contacting said at least one treatment chemistry with said viscoelastic fluid.

16. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 15, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is in a form of solid particles.

17. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 15, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is uniformly dispersed on said portion of said at least one of said surface and said interior of said nonwoven web material.

18. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 15, wherein said nonwoven web material comprises a plurality of nonwoven material layers.

19. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 18, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is dispersed on less than all of said plurality of nonwoven material layers.

20. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 15, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is dispersed non-homogeneously within said nonwoven web material.

21. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 15, wherein said viscoelastic fluid is menses.

22. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 15, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is disposed within an interior of at least a portion of said polymeric fibers.

23. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 15, wherein said nonwoven web material is selected from the group consisting of spunbond, meltblown, bonded carded, airlaid, bonded pulp, unbonded pulp, coform and combinations thereof.

24. (Currently amended) A method in accordance with Claim 15, wherein said treatment chemistry ~~is a mixture of at least one said ionically cross-linking~~ comprises the water-soluble gelling agent and a superabsorbent.

25. (Currently amended) A method in accordance with Claim 15, wherein said treatment chemistry comprises ~~at least one said ionically cross-linking the~~ water-soluble gelling agent.

26. (Currently amended) A method in accordance with Claim 25, wherein said ~~ionically cross-linking~~ water-soluble gelling agent comprises a polyglycan.

27. (Currently amended) In an absorbent article comprising an absorbent layer having a first surface and a second surface, a fluid permeable cover disposed adjacent said first surface, a fluid impervious baffle disposed adjacent said second surface, the improvement comprising:

at least one treatment chemistry selected from the group consisting of ~~ionically cross-linking~~ water-soluble gelling agents which crosslink protein, thickening agents, agglutinating agents, plasma precipitators, mucolytic agent, lysing agents and combinations thereof disposed at least one of on or within at least a portion of said absorbent layer.

28. (Original) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 27 further comprising a superabsorbent disposed within said absorbent layer.

29. (Currently amended) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 28, wherein said treatment chemistry comprises ~~at least one said ionically cross-linking the~~ water-soluble gelling agent.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Original) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 27 further comprising at least one material selected from the group consisting of airlaid, airformed, wetlaid, absorbent laminates, nonwovens and combinations thereof.

32. (Currently amended) An absorbent article comprising:

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a nonwoven material treated with a treatment chemistry selected from the group consisting of ~~ionically cross-linking~~ water-soluble gelling agents which crosslink protein, thickening agents, agglutinating agents, plasma precipitators, mucolytic agents, lysing agents and combinations thereof.

33. (Original) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 32, wherein at least one superabsorbent is disposed within said nonwoven material.

34. (Currently amended) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 32, wherein said treatment chemistry comprises ~~at least one said ionically cross-linking the~~ water-soluble gelling agent.

35. (Canceled)

36. (Original) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 32, wherein said treatment chemistry is disposed within a plurality of polymeric fibers comprising said nonwoven material.

37. (Original) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 32, wherein said nonwoven material is selected from the group consisting of airlaid, spunbond, meltblown, bonded carded, non-bonded pulp, bonded pulp and combinations thereof.

38. (Original) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 32, wherein said nonwoven material comprises a plurality of nonwoven layers.

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39. (Original) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 38, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is dispersed at least one of on and in less than all of said plurality of nonwoven layers.

40. (Original) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 32, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is dispersed non-homogeneously within said nonwoven material.

41. (Original) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 32, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is disposed on a surface of at least a portion of a plurality of polymeric fibers of said nonwoven material.

42. (Original) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 32, wherein said nonwoven material comprises a plurality of bicomponent polymeric fibers and said at least one treatment chemistry is disposed in only one segment of said bicomponent polymeric fibers.

43. (Previously presented) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 32, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry comprises a mucolytic agent selected from the group consisting of cysteine, thioglycolates, dithiotriacol, other sulfur-containing thiol materials and combinations and mixtures thereof.

44. (Previously presented) A method in accordance with Claim 6, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is applied to at least one of opposed edges, opposed ends and a center region of said absorbent layer.

45. (Previously presented) A method in accordance with Claim 5, wherein said absorbent article comprises at least two opposed side wings to which said at least one treatment chemistry is applied.

46. (Previously presented) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 27, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is disposed on at least a portion of one of said fluid permeable cover and said fluid impervious baffle.

47. (Previously presented) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 27, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is disposed on at least one of a peripheral region and a center region of said absorbent layer.

48. (Previously presented) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 47, wherein said peripheral region comprises opposed edges and opposed ends of said absorbent layer.

49. (Previously presented) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 27 further comprising opposed side wings to which said at least one treatment chemistry is applied.

50. (Currently amended) An absorbent article in accordance with Claim 49, wherein said at least one treatment chemistry is one of said ~~ionically cross-linking~~ water-soluble gelling agent and said thickening agent.